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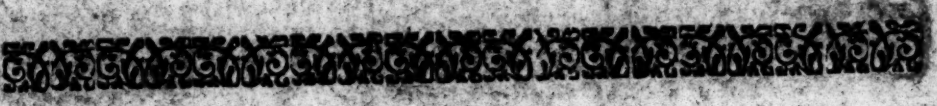
S E R M O N S

On 2 Cor. iv. 3

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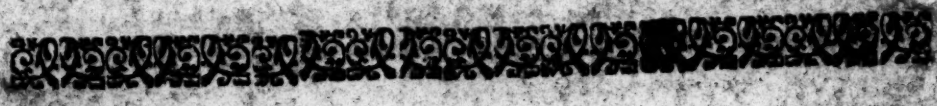
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Mr. *Bliss's*
S E R M O N S

On 2 Cor. iv. 3



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The Gospel hidden to them that are lost.

Being the Substance of
TWO SERMONS
Preached at CONCORD;

Shewing when and whence the Gospel is hid
to any under the Dispensation of it; and
some of the Miseries such Persons are under,
and others to which they are exposed.

By DANIEL BLISS, A. M.
And Pastor of the Church there.

Published at the repeated Request, and free Cost, of some who
heard them.

Deut. xxix. 4. *Yet the Lord hath not given you a Heart to
perceive, and Eyes to see, and Ears to hear, unto this Day.*

2 Cor. iii. 16, 17. *But even unto this Day, when MOSES is
read, the Vail is upon their Heart: Nevertheless, when it
[or They] shall turn to the Lord, the Vail shall be taken
away.*

B O S T O N :

Printed and Sold by S. KNEELAND in Queen-street.

7 5 5.

The Gospel begins to them that are lost.

Being the substance of

TWO SERMONS

Preached at Concord:

the first on the Sabbath the 10th of July 1781
the second on the Sabbath the 17th of July 1781
by the Rev. Mr. John May.

A. M.

and Published by the Author.

In the City of Concord, New Hampshire, 1781.

Printed by J. May, at the New England Press, in the City of Boston.

BOSTON:

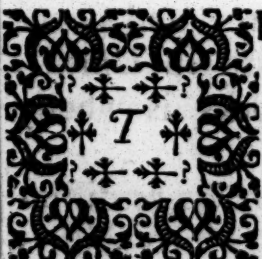
Printed and Sold by S. Kneeland in Concord.

The Gospel hidden to them that
are lost.

? * * * * ?

2 COR. IV. 3.

*But if our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that
are lost.*



THE Gospel, one of the greatest Privileges wherewith any can be favoured, hath been abused by Multitudes who have continued obstinately rebellious against God, and perished in their Sins, this glorious Dispensation notwithstanding. *Who hath believed our Report? and to whom is the Arm of the Lord revealed?* hath been a Complaint suitable for almost every Age of the Church, howsoever applicable to that wherein Christ personally preached: his Apostles and Ministers, even such who have had the most happy Success, tho' many believed thro' their Word, yet found that many believed not; some were saved, others perished under their Ministry. This is the general import of the Text now before us, which supposeth the Gospel is hid *to*, or *in* some who are under it; asserting all such to be *lost*.

In

In discoursing on this Subject, I shall endeavour by divine Help, to consider ; What is the Gospel ; When and whence this is hid to any under it ; How and why such are lost ; And then offer some Things that by God's Blessing may help us to some profitable *Improvement* of the whole.

I. With Regard to what we are to understand by the *Gospel* ; the whole System of revealed Religion, all the Doctrines and Precepts, Promises and Threatnings of God, as express'd in the Bible ; is *the most general Sense* thereof.

As *distinct* from and *opposite* to the *Law*, the *Gospel* is the *Covenant of Grace* exhibited ; whereby eternal Salvation is *proposed* and *offered* in the Lord Jesus Christ, " who is given for a Covenant of the People ; of God " is made unto us Wisdom and Righteousness, and " Sanctification and Redemption."

In this Sense, the *Gospel* is a *Tender* of Salvation, a Proclamation of Pardon and Peace, Mercy and Grace from God, to a sinful World thro' Faith in Christ ; concerning which the Covenant of Works is wholly silent.

In *another Sense*, the *Gospel* is the *Christian* as distinguished from the *Mosaic Dispensation* ; which differs therefrom so much as *this* is disburdened of the many Sacrifices, Rites and Ceremonies with which *that* imposed a Yoke too heavy for them to bear, who were under it ; *this* more plainly and more fully represents the Truths, the Salvation, the Grace of God by Jesus Christ, and is more widely, even universally extended to the World of Mankind.

The *Jewish* was a truly gracious Dispensation : unto *them* was the Gospel preached as really as it is unto *us* : the *Law* given by *Moses* was in the Hands of a *Mediator* : the Lord enjoined them Obedience, among others, from this peculiar and very endearing Motive, *I am the Lord*

Lord thy God. || He was their *Covenanted God* in the Redeemer only ; neither was it expected that they should keep his Commandments any farther than they derived Grace and Strength from God therefor, according to the Tenor of the New Covenant. But they had *many Ordinances*, † which the Apostle calls *carnal*, that is, *fleshly* ; because weak, or not abiding ; which enjoined their Attendance on weak & beggarly Elements, which by the Appointment of God were to be in his Church but for a Season. The *Saviour* then to come, together with all the *great Things of their Peace* were more obscurely represented by Types, Shadows and Figures : but now *CHRIST being come*, these are done away ; Light and Heat are shed abroad with distinguishing Brightness and Efficacy ; our Duty is become more evident and more strongly enforced ; the Kingdom of God is preached with peculiar Advantage and Glory. Now the great and glorious Designs of God are rendered more apparent : “ Who hath saved us and called us
 “ with a holy Calling ; not according to our Works,
 “ but according to his own Purpose and Grace, which
 “ was given us in Christ before the World began ; but
 “ is now made manifest by the Appearing of our Saviour
 “ JESUS CHRIST, who hath abolished Death, and hath
 “ brought Life and Immortality to Light through the
 “ Gospel. If the Ministration of *Death* written and
 “ engraven in Stones was glorious, so that the Children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the Face of
 “ *Moses*, for the Glory of his Countenance, which
 “ Glory was to be done away ; how shall not the Ministration of the SPIRIT be rather glorious ? For if
 “ the Ministration of *Condemnation* be Glory ; much
 “ more doth the Ministration of *Righteousness* exceed
 “ in Glory. For even that which was made glorious,
 “ had no Glory in this Respect, by Reason of the Glory

|| Exod. xx. 2. † Heb. vii. 16. ix. 10.

that

" that excelleth. For if that which is *done away* wa
 " glorious, much more that which *remaineth* is glorious.
 " Seeing then that we have such Hope, we use grea
 " *Plainness* of Speech. And not as *Moses* which put
 " *Vail* over his Face that the Children of *Israel* could
 " not steadfastly look to the End of that which is abo
 " lished."

In the *Jewish* Economy, the divine Revelation and
 special Grace were very much confined to them ; to
 " whom pertained the Adoption and the Glory, and the
 " Covenants, and the giving of the Law, and the Service
 " of God, and the Promises." Whereas the *Gentile*
 " were without Christ, being Aliens from the common
 " Wealth of *Israel*, and Strangers from the Covenants of
 " Promise, having no Hope, and without God in the
 " World." While his Abode was on Earth, Christ very
 much confined his own, & the Ministry of his Disciples,
 to the lost Sheep of the House of *Israel* ; " But now in
 " Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were far off, are made
 " nigh by the Blood of Christ. For he is our Peace,
 " who hath made both *Jews* & *Gentiles* one, and hath
 " broken down the middle Wall of Partition between us,
 " having abolished in his Flesh the Enmity, even the
 " Law of Commandments contained in Ordinances ;
 " and came and preached by his Ministers Peace to you
 " *Gentiles* which were afar off, and to them the *Jews*
 " that were nigh. For thro' him we both have an
 " Access by one Spirit unto the Father. If ye have
 " heard of the Dispensation of the Grace of God which
 " is given me to you-ward, which in other Ages was
 " not made known unto the Sons of Men, as it is now
 " revealed unto his holy Apostles and Prophets by the
 " Spirit, that the Gentiles should be Fellow-heirs and
 " of the same Body and Partakers of his Promise in
 " Christ, by the Gospel."

II. We proceed now to consider, *when* the Gospel is *hid* to such as are under it : which is true of all who don't *believe* nor *conform* to the divine Report ; who neither *love* nor *obey* it.

1. The Gospel is hid to them, who are *ignorant* of it's *great and fundamental Truths* ; who know not such Doctrines as are essential to Godliness. How difficult soever it may be to determine, what Measures of doctrinal Knowledge are absolutely necessary to Salvation, or how much *Ignorance* Persons may be under respecting the Doctrines of the Gospel, while it is not hid to them ; yet it is easy to see, that they are in great Darkness respecting the Gospel, who don't know it's *general Tendency and Design* is to exhibit the *divine Glory*, the *Riches of God's Grace*, to *exalt the Redeemer*, to *exclude all boasting from*, and *abase the Sinner* ; that the *great Design of Christ's Mission and coming into the World*, as it relates to the Elect of God, was to seek & save *apostate Man* ; that *Christ is the End of the Law for Righteousness* ; in and by whom only is *Forgiveness of Sins* ; and this most freely *without Money and without Price*.

Tho' Persons may not be acquainted with many Things which it is very desirable they should know, and therefrom we may not conclude the Gospel to be *hid* to them ; yet this we must suppose of them, when they *know not* that Jesus Christ is the Son of God ; that he died and rose from the Dead for our Justification, is ascended into Heaven, and will from thence come to judge both the Living and the Dead ; when they are unacquainted with Man's ruined State, and that a Recovery therefrom, is only by the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. Be sure the Gospel is *hid* to them, who *see not a divine Beauty and Glory therein*, who don't *truly love and highly esteem* it. The Gospel of God abundantly represents the divine Glory : the Perfections of the blessed God are thereby set forth to the most pleasing and adora-

able View : his Knowledge, Wisdom, Holiness, Power, Love, Goodness and Patience, are here, O how marvellously displayed ! His Righteousness and Grace that appear in some Contrast, are here reconciled with Honour to both : Mercy and Truth have met together, Righteousness and Peace have kissed each other : God appears to be just while he justifieth the Ungodly.

Herein are exhibited the Natures, Offices, Doctrines, Works and Worship, Sufferings and Glory of the blessed Jesus ; the transcendent Amiability of his divine Person ; his All-sufficiency as Mediator ; his Willingness, Abilities and Fitness every Way, to save, even to the uttermost all that come unto God by him ; the Vertue of his Death to take away Sin ; and the Prevalence of his Intercession ; *By the which Will we are sanctified thro' the Offering of the Body of Jesus Christ once for all.*

Where also are most clearly to be seen, the Holiness and Purity, the Equity and Goodness of the divine Commands, and the Honours done them by Christ ; the Benefits and Blessings Believers in him are intitled to ; together with the Miseries in which they are involved, and to which they are exposed, who know not God, and obey not his Gospel. In which, as in other Respects, the Gospel is truly glorious ; and they to whom it is *not hid*, do on Account of some, of all these, or many more Considerations, highly prize it as containing the greatest and best Treasures any can be possessed of : Treasures infinitely exceeding all others in Kind, Riches, Plenty and Duration ; even the unsearchable Riches of Christ.

3. How much soever they know otherwise, the Gospel is *hid* to all who know it not by the efficacious transforming Influence of the Holy Spirit, in and upon their Hearts : Who are not by the Spirit of God so taught the Gospel, as to be inwardly, heartily, thoro'ly conform'd

form'd to the great Truths contained therein. Thro' a divine Agency, the Word effectually worketh in all that believe ; they hear and learn of the Father, receiving the Gospel not as the Word of Men, but as it is in Truth, the Word of God. They know divine Truths, not merely by Theory and Speculation, as what they are taught of Men, and their own Reason ; but by the Power of God accompanying his Revelation : whereby they are led into some true Knowledge of the Spirituality, Extent and Holiness of the divine Law, together with their want of Conformity unto and Transgressions thereof ; are brought to see Sin in some Degree, as it is, *exceeding sinful* : and how much soever they were alive in their own Apprehensions before, yet now upon this Discovery they *die* ; † find themselves in Sin, condemned therefor, righteously condemned by the Law ; that they are without Righteousness and Strength : They have Discoveries of Christ made unto their Souls, whereby they behold him in that Light in which the Gospel reveals him, as he is Mediator between God and Man, as having fulfilled all Righteousness ; who being without Sin in himself, was made Sin for us, that we might be made the Righteousness of God in him : They receive and rest on Christ only for Salvation, look to him for Righteousness and Strength ; come to him for Pardon, Justification and Life ; knowing indeed the Wages of Sin to be Death, but eternal Life the Gift, the free Gift of God thro' Jesus Christ our Lord : they are by the holy Ghost convinced of Sin in themselves, of Righteousness in Christ, and of Judgment against or Victory over Sin, by his efficacious all-powerful Mediation. Now they know the Grace of God in Truth ; it is brought Home upon their Hearts, with a sanctifying transforming Power, changing the Temper, Frame and Habit of their inmost

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Souls :

† Rom. vii. 9.

Souls : Their Minds are enlightened, their Wills rectified, the Disorders of their Affections removed : they have a new Bent and Disposition of Heart, conforming them to the Laws and Likeness of Christ : they are taught practically and heartily to deny all Ungodliness and every worldly Lust ; to mourn their past Offences against God, to live soberly and righteously and godly in this present evil World ; not conforming themselves to the Spirit, Temper and sinful Customs thereof : they are new Creatures ; old Things are past away ; behold all Things are become new : they are Partakers of the divine Nature ; know the true God and Jesus Christ ; love God and Men ; following Peace with all Men and Holiness ; put on Christ, and learn of him who was meek and lowly in Heart ; according to the Measure of Grace given them : They have the same Mind which was in Christ ; live and walk as he walked ; making it their present, continued and universal Business, to please God, to live by the Faith of his Son ; setting their Affections on Things above, not on Things on the Earth. By the gracious Indwelling and Influences of the holy Spirit, they are pressing forward in Holiness ; making Advances in Christian Knowledge, Faith, Hope & Charity ; opposing themselves to the World, the Flesh and the Devil ; loathing the Remainers of the Body of Sin in them : to their Sorrow do they find that how truly soever they are regenerate and sanctified in all their Powers and Faculties ; yet are they far from a perfect Delivery from Sin in any :

“ They find a Law in their Members warring against
 “ the Law of their Minds ; are therefore continually
 “ putting off the old Man which is corrupt according
 “ to the deceitful Lusts ; are putting on the new Man,
 “ which after God, or *according to God's moral Image*
 “ *and Likeness*, is created in Righteousness and true
 “ Holiness : They hunger and thirst after Righteous-
 ness :”

“nefs:” and heartily join with the Apostle; *Not as tho’ I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after, if I may apprehend that for which I am apprehended of Christ Jesus: Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one Thing I do, forgetting those Things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those Things which are before, I press toward the Mark, for the Prize of the high Calling of God in Christ Jesus.*

This is the happy Condition of all who truly know the Gospel: They are become Light in the Lord; Children of the Day and of the Light; manifestly declared to be the Epistle of Christ, written not with Ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, not in Tables of Stone, but in fleshly Tables of the Heart: who have not received the Spirit of the World, but the Spirit which is of God; Christ in them the Hope of Glory; beholding as in a Glass the Glory of the Lord, they are changed into the same Image from Glory to Glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord: whereby it is evident, that the Gospel is hid to all who want this transforming sanctifying Knowledge; whose Understandings are not opened by the Spirit of God so to behold the Light of the glorious Gospel, as thereby to be turned from Darkness to Light, from the Power of Satan unto God; to be made fruitful in Holiness, bringing forth the Fruits of the Spirit.

Upon the whole therefore, the Gospel is hid to all who are ignorant of the Principles of the Christian Religion, of such Doctrines as are essential thereto; to all who are not so acquainted therewith, as truly to love, highly esteem and delight themselves in the Gospel; to all who are not knowing to it’s Power; who are not Partakers of the Spirit of God, and brought into a Resemblance of his moral Perfections; who have not their Hearts and Lives conformed to the Laws and imitable Example of Christ: To all such is the Gospel hid;

hid ; whether they be scandalous notorious Sinners, or more covertly living in a Dependence on their negative Righteousness, partial Reforms and Obedience.

It might be expected that all should at once embrace the great Salvation, and without Delay become obedient to the Gospel, which so plainly and strongly represents the inseparable Connection of our Duty & Interest. But how infinitely different herefrom are the Lives of Multitudes, who tho' under this glorious Dispensation, give sorrowful Demonstrations, that it is hidden to them ; that they see no Beauty therein, nor in it's divine Original ; that they are Darkness and walk therein, not seeing nor desiring the Beauties of Holiness ; but that they love and work Iniquity ; many, living no more conformable to the Gospel than do the Heathen.

III. My Design is therefore now to consider the *Source* of this great Evil ; whence it is that the Gospel is hidden to them : Which indeed is of *Themselves*, as also from the *Devil*, and those *Corruptions* which are in the *World* through Lust.

The principal Occasions thereof are the *Blindness* of their Minds, the *Depravity* of their Affections, and *Perverseness* of the Will. Who so blind as they that will not see ? The Light of the glorious Gospel shineth all around them ; yet they refuse to open their Eyes, but darken their Windows, and will not admit the Light to shine in unto them : they walk in Darkness of Choice ; refusing to come to the Light because their Deeds and Hearts are Evil, only Evil, and this continually. The Gospel of God reproveth them ; they will therefore neither come to nor stand in it's Light, which shineth in Darkness, and they comprehend it not ; having the Understanding darkned, being alienated from the Life of God, thro' the Ignorance that is in them, because of the Blindness of their Heart. In seeing they see not, and in hearing they don't understand :

their

their carnal Minds are Enmity against God, are not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can they, will they be, while they remain thus carnal, depraved, and perverse.

Next to, and in Confederacy with themselves, the Devil must be deemed the great Agent in this Matter ;” In whom the God of this World hath blinded the Minds of them which believe not, lest the Light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the Image of God should shine unto them ;” or “ so that the Illumination of the Gospel of the Glory of Christ, hath not shined to them. *

This great Adversary of the Gospel and of Souls, reigns in the Children of Disobedience, leading them Captive at his Will, by keeping them in Ignorance concerning the Gospel ; well knowing that if Persons have a real Knowledge of it's divine Glory and Excellence, he shall lose them & their Services for ever ; that they will cleave to the Lord with great Resolution and gladness of Soul : He therefore hates, and strives to extirpate the Gospel from among Men ; which while he is not able to effect, doth all he can to keep them ignorant of it, to fill their Minds with false Sentiments and erroneous Opinions, to prejudice them against it, and prepossess them in favour of such Things as are contrary to the Gospel : To which End he makes use of the Things, and Men of this World ; nor will he fail to misrepresent the Fidelity and Holiness of good Men ; misimproving their Infirmities, Errors and Sins, when and how far soever it is possible for him ; and on Occasion hath cited Scripture ; but this in a false partial Way, thereby to hide the Light, to conceal and darken the Truth.

We are ever to remember, that this malicious subtle Enemy, never engageth any against the Gospel, nor beguiles

+ Dr. Hammond in loc.

guiles unwary and unstable Souls, but *by their own Consent*; tho' thro' his Wiles they may be so deluded, so infatuated, as strongly to imagine themselves to be enlightened by the Gospel unto Salvation, and that they are doing God good Service, while they live in direct Opposition thereto.

It is oftentimes as needless as difficult, to discriminate the *Suggestions* and Temptations of *Satan*, from the *Corruptions* and Lusts of Men, which are evil in both; proceeding from an ill Principle to the same destructive End, in Turnings and Workings various and innumerable.

In all, to whom the Gospel is hid, *Unbelief* is a leading Cause. *The Word preached did not profit, not being mixed with Faith in them that heard it.* The God of this World *blinds the Minds of them* only and of all them *who believe not.* Some reject very great Doctrines of the Gospel from their Creed: very many don't lay to Heart, nor really believe such Truths as they profess to believe; whereby it very naturally happens, that the greatest Things in the Gospel don't at all move them: The Being, the Perfections and Glory of the blessed God, and of the Lord Jesus Christ, affect them not; the Certainty, Causes and Consequences of Death and Judgment have little or no Effect upon them: they don't believe the State of unrenewed Man to be so full of Wretchedness and Woe, nor the Happiness of the renewed so sure and compleat; neither the Favour of God to be so infinitely desirable, nor his Wrath so immediately and earnestly to be deprecated, as the Gospel teacheth. A fatal Bar this, to their Reception of it's Light; Persons with-holding a cordial realising Belief of the great Things contained in the Gospel.

Pride, prevents Multitudes from entertaining the Light of the glorious Gospel of Christ: the various Workings whereof, in the same and in different Persons

at the same and differing Times, are indeed many, and far beyond what are commonly or easily discerned.

How often doth our *Pride* hinder us from acknowledging ourselves to be what the Gospel relates of us ; to be so guilty that we are altogether dependent on the Mercy, the pure Mercy and free Grace of God ; that he would be just should he never save us for all we have done, are doing, or hope to do ? Their *Pride of Heart* opposeth their being justified intirely by the Righteousness of Christ, thro' God's Imputation and their receiving it by Faith. God knoweth how many are lost eternally, because their proud Hearts will not bow, will not submit to him in this particular ; and how many by Reason of *Pride* will not own themselves to be so dead in Trespases and Sins, that they need the quickening Influences of the *Holy Spirit* ; so ignorant, that they need his Teachings ; so depraved, that they are haters of God, who is good, & doth so much good to them ; that they are throughout so corrupt, as to be under an Impossibility and Incapacity of entring into the Kingdom of God, *except they be born again.*

Sometimes their *Pride* will not permit Persons to forbear doing what the Gospel forbids, nor to attend such Duties and Exercises as this requires ; be sure they will not do them if after all, they are no ways justified by them, and may not plead their own Goodness in such Acts of Obedience.

It is to be feared, that often Persons live in Blindness respecting the Gospel, from a *fond false Imagination* that they *already know it* ; will not therefore look into their Hearts or Lives with any Seriousness, to examine themselves by the Gospel ; but please themselves with a Notion that they see, while yet they are blind, hereby preventing themselves from being enlightned by it. If in their own *Apprehension*, as in *Reality*, they were blind, they might be concerned to come for divine Instruction, from

the Word by the Spirit of God. *Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with Goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked; I counsel thee, saith Christ, to buy of me Gold tried in the Fire, that thou mayst be rich, and white Raiment, that thou mayst be clothed, and that the Shame of thy Nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine Eyes with Eye-salve, that thou mayst see.* But by a false Imagination that thou dost already possess, and needest not to receive these of Christ, art diverted from his most gracious Proposals, Invitations, and Commands.

How common is it for Men to kindle a Fire, and compass themselves about with Sparks; to walk in the Light of their Fire, and in the Sparks that they have kindled? To have their Comforts and Joys, their Hopes of eternal Salvation, and all from themselves, *their own supposed Goodness, Inoffensiveness to Men, and Works of Righteousness?* To flatter themselves that they are no Extortioners, nor Drunkards, nor profane Swearers; or that they are not so bad as many they know; trusting in themselves that they are Righteous; despising others; deceiving themselves either by what they suppose *good Living*, or by their *good Designs* of Reformation and Purposes of Amendment from, and Sorrow for Sin, while yet their Hearts cleave to Iniquity? Because *God* is good, and delights in Goodness and Mercy; not considering the Righteousness and Holiness of God in his Nature and Laws? Because of the many good and gracious *Promises*, when they believe not in the Promises, nor fulfil any Condition whereby they may claim a Title, a Right to the Blessings contained in the Promises?

I grant, that Persons *under Soul Distress* because of their Sinfulness, Guiltiness and Wretchedness thereby; may encourage themselves to hope in the Mercies of
God

God from a Consideration of absolute Promises, which assure us that *some shall be saved by Christ*; "Why not therefore such a poor Hell-deserving one as I?" "Who can tell, but I may be one of that Number which shall be saved? I will therefore be crying to God for Mercy, striving to enter in at the strait Gate; for who knoweth but I may one Day be pardoned, justified and saved?" Such a Practice in a wounded Soul, I am not opposing: but for Persons to flatter themselves with hopes of God's Salvation, because of Blessings promised to the pure in Heart, to the Righteous, to the Meek, to the Believer, while they are neither; is but a meer Fig-Leaf, a delusory Dream, the Hypocrite's Hope. How often do Persons conclude themselves to be in a safe State, from such Things, which though they have, do not bring them into real Christianity, truly to believe in Christ, to love God supremely, ~~to~~ to delight in his Word, in all Goodness and Righteousness, hating and flying from all Iniquity? From such Things, which were they to be found in them, would prove them to be indeed Christians; but they have them not? For Instance; is it not to be feared, that many Times Persons think they *love* God, when truly they love him not? Having Mis-conceptions of God, thinking him to be like themselves; forming an Image of God in their Minds infinitely different from what he is; this they love with their sinful Lusts, while the true God they hate. So is it to be feared that Persons often terribly mistake concerning *Faith*; imagining that they believe in Christ, when they have not that Faith which is wrought in the Soul by the efficiency of Almighty God; which purifieth the Heart, and worketh by Love.

Many are careless, awfully careless of the Gospel, stupid and thoughtless of that Salvation to which it calls them; so that probably they never think seriously,

that they are accountable to God ; that they are sinful ; that they have immortal Souls, of inconceivable Worth, for which no Equivalent can be given in Exchange ; never seriously ask themselves, “ Do I love God, and “ Jesus Christ whom he hath sent ? Am I conformed to “ the Gospel ? Do I live in the fear of God, and by the “ Faith of his Son :” Who neither know nor consider the Word of God, and the Operation of his Hands ; whereby neither Promises nor Threatenings, neither Mercies nor Judgments, are Motives in them to Repentance.

Oftentimes the Gospel is hid to Persons from their *dilatory Spirit* ; who have Thoughts of hearkening thereto in some future Time, but at present cannot be willing to attend it : they may readily say with him in the Parable, *I go Sir* ; but delay with him, and *go not* : by deferring the Matter, in Expectation of a more convenient Season, which never comes, they sink deeper under Sin's Guiltiness, Defilement and Power, have more to do, less Opportunity, and greater Aversion thereunto.

Some oppose themselves to the Gospel, from Apprehensions, that upon their becoming obedient thereto, they must *renounce all Pleasures*, and enter upon *gloomy melancholy Employments*, pass thro' Scenes of unknown Troubles and Sorrows ; not knowing that the Gospel gives a Thousand-fold for all it requires us to forsake ; that it gives Pleasures far exceeding all it takes, in Kind, Numbers, and Measure ; and spreads over the Soul, a calm, a Peace, a Joy and Gladness, better felt than expressed ; infinitely superiour to all the Pleasures of Sin, which are but for a Season.

Some have been afraid of *Contempt* and *Reproach* from Men, should they permit the Light of the Gospel to influence their Hearts and Lives : not considering, that thereby only can they be brought to true Honour and

and Dignity ; in having their Spirits truly enobled by an Elevation to divine and heavenly Objects, and to a correspondent Behaviour in Life ; in having the Approbation of their own, and oftentimes the Consciences of others, the Estimation of wise Men, of holy Angels, and of God.

Many quarrel with the Gospel, because of the *Holiness* and *Purity* to which it calleth them : their sinful Lusts are so dear to them, what they are so accustomed to indulge, that to renounce them is like cutting off a right Hand, or plucking out a right Eye : they therefore turn away from the Gospel, because it requires to crucify the Flesh with it's Affections & Lusts ; to mortify the Members that are upon the Earth, Fornication, Uncleanness, inordinate Affection, evil Concupiscence, and Covetousness which is Idolatry ; to be holy as God is holy, and pure as Christ is pure.

God knows how many are averse to the Gospel, because they *set their Affections on earthly Things* : they are bid to the rich Entertainments, the plentiful Provisions and Blessings of the Gospel ; but they delight in other Objects, their Farms and Merchandize ; praying to be excused from the Love of God, because they love earthly Things : *The Cares of this World, and the Deceitfulness of Riches, and the Lusts of other Things entring in, choke the Word, and it becometh unfruitful.*

Multitudes remain blind respecting the Gospel, because they *resist* and *quench* the HOLY SPIRIT, and his friendly Motions and gracious Operations. This they do ; by rejecting the Word, the Doctrines, Precepts, Counsels, Admonitions, and Reproofs of God ; by neglecting Duties, and by a careless Performance of them ; by casting off Fear, and restraining Prayer ; by not asking at all, or not with Importunity and Perseverance crying to God for his Salvation ; by casting Contempt on the Truths and Institutions of the Gospel ;

Gospel ; by thrusting themselves out of those Ways in which God hath been used to command a Blessing ; by refusing to consider ; by rushing into sinful Company, and sinful Practices ; by making themselves and others merry, while they jest and mock at sacred Things ; ridiculing the Professors of Christianity, in and for their Adherence to the divine Will : By these and other like Methods innumerable, Persons are resisting the HOLY GHOST, and walking in Darkness.

O how many are the *Occasions*, internal and external, whereby the Gospel is hid to Men ! By their own and the sinful Suggestions of others ; by Sentiments that may seem to coincide with, but are diverse from the Gospel ; by Pretences to Religion, while it's Reality is wanting ; by resting in superficial Views of the Law, slight Convictions of Sin, imaginary Views only of the Love and Mercy of God toward themselves, deceiving their own Souls ! From which and all other Methods of Error and Delusion, we should earnestly pray to be delivered, because all to whom the Gospel is hid *are lost*. And now,

IV. I am to consider, what we are to understand by their being *lost* : Now we are not to suppose them lost with Respect to God's *eternal Purpose* ; *who hath made all Things for himself, yea even the Wicked for the Day of Evil* : God knows how to glorify himself, and will illustrate his Holiness and Justice by & upon all finally impenitent. But they are lost, intirely lost, to all *Duty, Love and Obedience* toward GOD ; to all *Good and Happiness* respecting *themselves*.

1. They are *lost in the Defilement and Power of Sin*. As benighted, bewildered Persons not knowing whether they go, nor what Course to take, in order to do any Thing for, or enjoy any Thing of God. They neither know, nor love, nor obey God ; never propose Him and his Glory as their governing End ; but are
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immersed in Sin, sunk into worldly, sensual, and devilish Lusts, from which they know not how to arise : *Self* is the great Idol they serve.

Man was made and adapted to know, love, and glorify GOD, and to be for ever bless'd in the Love and Enjoyment of him ; with Regard to which, all are lost in whom the Gospel is hid. As their Services, Sufferings, and Enjoyments, are no Way conformed nor subjected to the Will of God ; so neither are they in any of all these, nor in their Persons, accepted of him.

Miserably lost these ; who neither love nor are beloved of Him, whose Favour is Life, and his Loving-kindness better than Life ; who are estranged from God and his Ways ; from the Pleasures of Religion, from a holy, humble, delightful Contemplation of, Faith in, and Dedication to their Creator & Redeemer ; are without Christ, without God, and without any good Hope in the World ; destitute of the present Supports, Comforts and Rewards which are found, in keeping God's Commandments ; and of the solid, joyful Prospects of that future Happiness and Glory which the Gospel reveals.

2. But again, they are lost in that they are under *Guilt* and *Condemnation* for Sin. The righteous Law of God condemneth them, for their Violations of it : *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all Things which are written in the Book of the Law to do them : He that believeth not, is condemned already.* They to whom the Gospel is hid, are not only under the *Power & Defilement*, but *Guilt* of Sin ; are by a holy Law under Sentence of eternal Death : Their Consciences are not only defiled, but guilty ; and unless greatly stupified blinded and seared, are oftentimes rendering them uneasy and painful on Account of their Sins, and Guiltiness thereby.

3. If

3. If they *die*, the Gospel being hid to them, then immediately they are *deprived of all that hath been good and pleasing ~~here~~ to them*^{here}; are driven away into Darkness; the Sentence of Condemnation, which they had been always under in this World, is now executed upon them. Who can speak, who can think of the Miseries, Wretchedness, Woes and Torments of this State, according to their full Extent? Or in any Manner as we are informed concerning it, by Christ and his Apostles; and not be concerned to escape it? As we know but very little concerning the Glories of Heaven, that Fulness of Joys & those Rivers of Pleasures which ever flow at God's Right Hand; so we are greatly ignorant of the Miseries of the Damned; whose Souls first, and at the Resurrection their Bodies, *both* endure the eternal Pains of Hell; where all that is good and desirable to humane Nature will be ever absent; all that is uncomfortable, evil and undesirable, ever present.

The Riches, Honours and Pleasures, which here they pursued, are far removed from them. Suppose a Desire, a Relish for earthly Delights and sensual Gratifications, should remain; these Appetites will but add to their Vexation and Torment, being under an impossibility of gratifying them.

A Remembrance of the good Things which they have received, will, O how greatly, inhanse their Sorrows. Conscience, that never dying Worm, in Allusion to Worms bred within, and feeding upon the Bowels, the Vitals, the most tender and sensible Parts of the Body, will not fail to gnaw upon the Soul in the most keen and bitter Reproaches; charging full home upon them the Follies and Madness which in this World they have been guilty of, in abusing the Mercies, slighting the Grace, and rejecting the Love of God. How much they will then be made to see, of God, and the *Happiness* of *Saints* in *Heaven*, we know not; but probably much more

more than here they have had any Conceptions of, all to the increase of their Anguish in beholding the Good they have lost, in the loss of God, and the Felicities of the heavenly World : Then there will be weeping and gnashing of Teeth, when they shall see *Abraham, Isaac* and *Jacob*, and Multitudes from the East & West, North and South, coming and sitting with them in the Kingdom of God, and themselves thrust out by Christ with God's Curse upon them. Now they will be under Shame and everlasting Contempt : In blackness, of Darkeness, where they shall neither see nor hear any Thing but what is frightful and horrible to them ; where their Companions shall be damned Devils their Tormentors, and miserable Persons doom'd to the same wretched Fate with themselves ; where reign without controul, perfect Hatred, Rage, Enmity and Malice, among themselves, against God, and all that is Good. The Evils here inflicted, are, O how many, how intollerable ; under which they could by no Means exist, were they not continued in Being by the same Power that gave it : God supports them under the Weight, the amazing Weight of his Wrath, who punisheth them in his Fury, and taketh Vengeance upon them in his sore Displeasure ; neither will his Eye spare, nor his Heart pity. The Anguish of Souls in this State, none can conceive : God graciously grant, that we may not any of us experience it.

How many, how great soever are the Torments of the Damned ; they will be eternal, without Intermision, Abatement, and Remedy ; the sharpness of their Pains will not be abated, nor their Miseries lessen'd by their having been long accustomed to them ; but probably will always be increasing, becoming more keen and distressing, under enlarged Capacities and Views of the Holiness and Justice, Power and Goodness of God.

The *Eternity of Hell-Torments*, cannot with any Reason be doubted, by those who receive the Bible as God's

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Word,

Word, and the Lord Jesus Christ as a true and faithful Prophet ; which assure us, that the Damned in Hell shall suffer the Vengeance of eternal Fire ; “ where their
 “ Worm dieth not, and the Fire is not quenched : And
 “ these shall go away into everlasting Punishment ;
 “ but the Righteous into Life eternal.”

Such therefore as die in their Sins are eternally lost, will be the Monuments of God's Wrath and Indignation *for ever* : so that when they shall have suffered as many Millions of Ages, as there shall have been Moments from the Beginning to the End of Time ; they will have arrived nothing nearer to an End of their Torments than they were the Moment they entred into them, but will be even then beginning to make their Bed in Hell. Of this they will ever be under deep and full Conviction, that they are never to have Deliverance, that they are remedilessly, eternally lost, that there will be no End to their Miseries : all Gleams of Hope are now shut out from them for ever : Despair, perfect despair of all Relief reigns in them : they have no Prospect of any Thing but an Eternity of Torments ; to lie down *in Sorrow* ; never, never to rise therefrom : whereby they are crushed and broken beyond all our Thoughts.

V. But what meaneth all this so great Wrath ; *why* are all to whom the Gospel is hid, thus lost ?

1. Because by *Sin*, we are fallen from GOD and our Happiness ; have incur'd his holy Displeasure, and deserve his Wrath. *Sin when finished, it brings forth Death* : Temporal, spiritual and eternal Death, are the Nature, Tendency, Wages, and Fruit of Sin ; thereby we forsake the Fountain of Life and Blessedness, and are necessarily so far miserable as we are sinful. When the Sun with-holds his Light and Heat, Cold and Darkness come upon us : When infectious Diseases, burning Fevers and strong Pains fill our Bodies, their Health
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and Ease are removed : but not more naturally these, than our Happiness and well being by Sin ; which darkens the Understanding, perverts the Will, disorders the whole Man, turning him from God. Besides, as all Sin is committed against a Being of infinite Perfections, it's demerit is everlasting Punishment to the Sinner.

2. There is no Deliverer from Sin, and it's Effects, but the LORD JESUS CHRIST only. "Neither is there Salvation in any other, for there is none other Name under Heaven given among Men whereby we must be saved." "He came into the World to save his People from their Sins ; hath given himself a Ransom for many ; hath made Atonement for Sin by the Sacrifice of himself ; hath brought in an everlasting Righteousness : Him hath God exalted with his own right Hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give Repentance unto Israel, and Forgiveness of Sins."

3. We are *not saved* by JESUS CHRIST, unless we *believe* in Him. "By Grace are ye saved thro' Faith. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned."

4. We know not how any do or can *believe on* CHRIST but by the Gospel. *How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard ; and how shall they hear without a Preacher ?* The Gospel is the Medium for conveying the Knowledge of Christ and producing Faith in him. Under which Consideration, the Apostle greatly rejoiceth in Thanksgivings to God. "Who also causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the Savour of his Knowledge by us in every Place. For in Christ Jesus I have begotten you thro' the Gospel." The Preaching of Christ is to them that perish, Foolishness ; but unto us which are saved, it is the Power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the Wisdom of the wise, and will bring to Nothing

“ the Understanding of the prudent. Where is the
 “ Wise ? Where is the Scribe ? Where is the Dispu-
 “ ter of this World ? Hath not God made foolish the
 “ Wisdom of this World ? For after that, in the Wis-
 “ dom of God, the World by Wisdom knew not God,
 “ it pleased God by the Foolishness of Preaching to
 “ save them that believe.” As much as to say ; That
 in his infinite Wisdom God saw it fit to try a great Part
 of the World for many Ages together, without giving
 them a divine Revelation ; giving them Opportunity
 to exercise their own Reason, Knowledge and Skill for
 their Salvation ; who while in this State, tho’ many
 made divers Efforts toward the Knowledge of God
 and true Religion, yet never arrived thereto. How
 much soever *Socrates, Plato, Seneca* and others excelled
 in Knowledge and Wisdom, and had many Disciples,
 who professed much superiour Vertue to others ; yet
 by all their Learning and Wisdom, came not to the
 Knowledge of God ; no not their most Learned and
 Wise ; *the World by Wisdom*, by their own Wisdom apart
 from a divine Revelation, *knew not God*, but remained
 blind and lost in Sin : Then after so long a Trial and
 Experience of their Darkness and Inabilities respecting
 the Salvation of their Souls ; *it pleased God by the Fool-
 ishness of Preaching to save them that believe.*

5. None *believe* unto Salvation, but such in and to
 whom, the HOLY SPIRIT *revealeth* and *applieth* the
 great *Truths* of the Gospel. A Knowledge of Christ is
 brought to the Ear thro’ the Gospel ; the holy Spirit
 co-working, a Knowledge of Christ is convey’d to the
 Heart. *While Peter spake these Words, the Holy Ghost
 fell on all them which heard the Word.* For by Grace are
 ye *saved thro’ Faith*, and that not of your selves, it is the
 Gift of God. So then *Faith*, or Faith indeed, *cometh by
 bearing, and bearing by the Word of God.* In all that be-
 lieve in Christ, the Gospel hath a divine Energy thro’
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the Operation of the HOLY GHOST in and upon their Hearts ; opening their Understandings to see or discern divine Truths, and conforming them thereto ; “ taking away the Vail off the Heart ; taking away the Heart of Stone, and giving a Heart of Flesh.” This mighty Work of God in the Soul is variously represented by the Words which the HOLY GHOST useth, thereby to confirm the Reality, the absolute Necessity, and Greatness thereof. It is a Work well represented by *God's commanding the Light to shine out of Darkness*, then when the Earth was without Form and Void, and Darkness was on the Face of the Deep ; when God said, *Let there be Light, and there was Light*. It is the Exercise of a like divine Power to that which God exerted in the Production of all Things into Being ; and that exceeding Greatness of his mighty Power which he wrought in Christ at his Resurrection. “ For GOD who commanded the Light to shine out of Darkness hath shined in our Hearts, to give the Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of GOD in the Face or Person of JESUS CHRIST.” For we are his Workmanship created in CHRIST JESUS unto good Works. The Eyes of your Understanding being enlightned, that ye may know—what is the exceeding greatness of his Power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty Power ; which he wrought in CHRIST when he raised him from the Dead, and set him at his own right Hand in the heavenly Places. For you hath he quickned who were dead in Trespasses and Sins ; even when we were dead in Sins, hath he quickened us together with CHRIST.” The *Conversion* of a Sinner to GOD, his Reception of the special sanctifying Grace of GOD by having the Redemption of CHRIST apply'd to him, is to the Soul as a *Resurrection* is to the Body ; a *Restoration of Life* to the Dead.

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It is now evident, that Man being lost in and by Sin, from which there is no Recovery but in and by CHRIST ; and this not without *Faith*, which is given only by the *Gospel* through a *divine Influence*, giving a spiritual Knowledge of Gospel Truths unto the quickening and renewing of the Soul after the Image of God : Therefore they are lost to whom the Gospel is hidden ; such are finally lost to whom the Gospel is ever hidden ; who never have this divine Operation in and upon their Hearts, qualifying them for, and raising them to the Love and Service of GOD. Tho' the Fountain of Life is opened, and the Waters of the Sanctuary flow about them ; yet never coming thereto, nor washing therein, they are never cleansed, never healed nor saved.

VI. We are now to attend unto some *Improvement* of what hath been said ; which teacheth us,

1. That it is *not* by *moral Swasion*, how well soever adapted to convince and perswade ; *but* by the *Efficiency* of *Almighty Power*, that any Soul is truly *enlighten'd* into the Gospel, that any are *renewed* in Heart, and *converted* unto GOD.

The *holy Scriptures* are infinitely well adapted unto the gracious Purposes, for which they are designed ; but *meerly* thereby, never was a Person converted to GOD, nor by the best of Sermons delivered even by the greatest & best of Preachers. *Paul* may plant, & *Apollos* water ; but when ever a Soul is brought to the Knowledge of GOD in CHRIST, to know, love and obey the Gospel in Truth ; this Increase, this Effect is given and wrought of GOD. This, under CHRIST, that great Founder of his Church, was ever deeply sensible of, and on all Occasions represents : To this Purpose, in his first Epistle to the *Corinthians* second Chapter ; he writes, *And I Brethren when I came to you, came not with the excellency of Speech or of Wisdom, declaring unto you the Testimony of GOD. For I determined not to know any Thing*

Thing among you, save JESUS CHRIST, and him crucified. And my speech and my Preaching was not with the enticing Words of Man's Wisdom, but in Demonstration of the Spirit and of Power. A Writer † on the last of these Words of the Apostle, says, "He does not undervalue his own Reasoning and Style; only disavows the Subtleties of the Pagan Philosophy and their sophistical Oratory; but shews that no Arguments or Language can avail to reform and bring human Souls to the Love of God and a true Sense of their Duty, without divine Assistance and Inspiration." So Origen directly takes it; addeth the same Author. The divine Word here affirms, that what is spoken, (altho' in it self true and proper to persuade) is not sufficient to reach the Soul of Man, unless Power be given from GOD to the Speaker; and Grace shine out in the Expression, which is communicated from Heaven to those who speak with Force & Efficacy."

The Apostle's Manner was oftentimes to Reason out of the Scripture, and always agreeable thereto, adapting himself to the various Circumstances and Necessities of the People; || becoming all Things to all Men; using great Plainness of Speech; *not in the Words which Man's Wisdom teacheth, but which the HOLY GHOST teacheth*; entirely depending on CHRIST to make the Word effectual: *That your Faith should not stand in the Wisdom of Men, but in the Power of GOD*: not only in the Grace, Wisdom and Strength afforded him to speak; but more especially, in that Grace which was communicated from God to them, by his Almighty Power working Faith in them. *Howbeit we speak Wisdom among them that are perfect*; who being taught of GOD are wise unto Salvation, have the Wisdom of the Just, that Wisdom which cometh from above; yet not the

Mr. Blackwall, in his Defence and Illustration of the sacred
 Classes, P. 283. | Act. xvii. 2, 3. xxiv. 25.

*the Wisdom of this World, nor of the Princes of this World that come to nought : But we speak the Wisdom of GOD in a Mystery, even the hidden Wisdom which GOD ordained before the World unto our Glory ; which none of the Princes of this World knew. The Rulers and chief Priests among the Jews who were active in or some Way consenting to the Death of Christ, who had or might have had the Scriptures of the Old Testament ; yet were carnal, unenlightened, natural and unrenewed, having the Vail on their Hearts in the reading of Moses and the Prophets ; their Minds were blinded : they knew not, but were spiritually ignorant and undiscerning of GOD, of CHRIST, and of divine Truth ; for had they known (the little Word [it] is supplied by our Translators) they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory. But as it is written, * Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, neither have entred into the Heart of Man, the Things which GOD hath prepared for them that love him. But GOD hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit.*

By the Things here referred to, we may safely suppose, the Holy Ghost doth not intend *only* if at all, their Quantity, their Numbers and Extensiveness, together with the Fulness of Blessings and Glories, contained in and attending them ; with Regard to these, tho' they had far clearer and larger Discoveries than any before or since, yet the Apostles of CHRIST saw but as thro' a Glass darkly, knew but in Part, and prophesied accordingly : in this Sense, the Riches of divine Love, the eternal Weight of Glory they had no adequate Conceptions of, nor was it possible for them to have while in the Body ; which, suppose it might & had been given, neither might nor could have been uttered by them.

But the Quality of the Things prepared for all the truly pious, the excellency of their Nature, which the carnal Eye, Ear and Heart of the natural Man, hath

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* Isai. lxiv. 4.

never seen nor heard, nor hath any Conception of; but are as really and as much unknowing to, as we are to a Man's *Shape* and *Voice* whom we have never heard nor seen; † as we are to the *Fruit* of which Sort we never have tasted; or as those that have been *ever blind* are, to *Light* and *Colours*. *These Things* hath GOD revealed to us by HIS SPIRIT: O how great his Power in revealing, in making them known! not only to the *Apostles*, but to *all real Believers* in CHRIST; *who have received, not the Spirit of the World, but the SPIRIT which is of GOD, that we might know the Things which are freely given to us of GOD: Which Things also we speak—But the natural Man, the unrenewed Person, to whom we speak, receiveth not the Things of the SPIRIT of GOD; for they are Foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned: But he that is spiritual, renewed and sanctified in CHRIST JESUS, judgeth or discerneth all Things needful for his Salvation: yet he himself is judged, i. e. discerned of no Man; GOD only sees his Heart.*

As we are the Children of Disobedience and Wrath, are we under Sin's Dominion, hath Corruption seized all our Powers, are our Understandings darkned, our Affections alienated from, and are they Enmity against GOD, so that we put the Knowledge of him far from us, and hate to be reformed? By the sanctifying Grace of GOD, are we raised up to newness of Heart & Life? Are we Partakers of a new Nature, a divine Life superiour to the intellectual or rational Life, and as distinct therefrom, as the rational is superiour to & different from the animal Life? Have we a living operative Principle, abiding & increasing unto eternal Life; a Spark from Heaven leading the Soul thither? Are we thereby enlightned, cleansed and purified? Are we become the Temples of CHRIST, wherein are offered spiritual Sacrifices to GOD

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continually

† Joh. v. 37.

continually, even pure Offerings, from the Altar of our Hearts? Doth the Incense of Prayer and Praise, ascend to GOD in Faith & Love? Do we present our selves Souls and Bodies, living Sacrifices to GOD in all holy Obedience? Surely *he that hath wrought us for the self same Thing is GOD*: it is by his Operation only, by a creative Work of Omnipotence we are new wrought, new created in CHRIST JESUS; by the divine Spirit, fitted for and brought into GOD's Service here, and to his eternal Glory hereafter: *Who also hath given to us the earnest of the SPIRIT*; i. e. Part of, and the same in Kind with the Inheritance to which we stand intitled; whereby we partake of the heavenly Glory in its *Nature*, tho' in *Measure* inconceivably inferiour to the actual Possession of the whole.

Let us therefore be far, very far from entertaining the Tho't, that by our own, or the meer human Reasonings and perswasive Arguments of others, either we or any other of *Adam's* apostate Race, ever were or will be truly enlightned into the Gospel; become truly penitent, turning unto GOD, and doing Works meet for Repentance: for where these are, there is the Work of GOD, the Effect of Almighty Power.

2. What hath been said teacheth the *Sovereignty* of GOD in his conferring Grace and Favour unto Men; not only in his sending the Gospel to some, while others have it not; and this more largely and clearly to these latter than he did to the former Ages of the Church; but more especially in that GOD causeth some to know his Grace in Truth, to see a divine Glory, to find a transforming Power in the Gospel of CHRIST; while others under the same Gospel, in the same Church and Seat, are in Darkness concerning it, behold no Beauty, experience no Power in it, as do such who are eternally saved by CHRIST.

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This divine *Sovereignty* is abundantly taught by CHRIST: it was fully asserted "at that Time when
 " JESUS answered and said, I thank Thee, O FATHER,
 " LORD of Heaven and Earth, because thou hast hid
 " these Things from the wise and prudent, and hast
 " revealed them unto Babes; even so FATHER, for
 " so it seemed Good in thy Sight: All Things are
 " delivered to me of my FATHER; and no Man
 " knoweth the Son, but the FATHER; neither
 " knoweth any Man the FATHER, save the Son,
 " and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him;
 " *Mattb. xi. 25, — 27.* Also *Job. vi. 44, 45*; No Man can
 " come to ME, except the FATHER which hath sent
 " ME draw him: Every Man therefore that hath heard,
 " and learned of the FATHER cometh unto ME."

To the like Import, the *Apostles* of CHRIST declare the absolute *Sovereignty* of GOD in the free Disposals of his special Grace. "For you see your Calling Brethren, how that not many wise Men after the Flesh, not many Mighty, not many Noble, are called; but GOD hath chosen the foolish Things of the World, to confound the wise; and GOD hath chosen the weak Things of the World to confound the Things which are mighty; and base Things of the World, and Things which are despised, hath GOD chosen; yea and Things which are not, to bring to nought Things that are; that no Flesh should glory in his Presence. *Israel* which followed after the Law of Righteousness, hath not attained to the Law of Righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by Faith, but as it were by the Works of the Law. *Israel* hath not attained that which he seeketh for; but the Election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded. For the Gifts and Calling of GOD are without Repentance. O the Depth of the Riches both of the Wisdom and Knowledge of GOD! how

“ unsearchable are his Judgments, and his Ways past
 “ finding out ! For who hath known the Mind of the
 “ LORD, or who hath been his Counsellor ? Or who
 “ hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed
 “ unto him again ? For of him, and thro’ him, and
 “ to him, are all Things ; to whom be Glory for ever.
 “ Amen.

3. Hence the *Ministers* of CHRIST have much for
 their *Excitement*, *faithfully* to *preach* the *Gospel*, to *con-*
tinue and *abound* therein.

Doth the *Gospel* give a rich Display of the Glories of
 GOD; of the personal and mediatorial Glories of the
 REDEEMER ? Destitute of this, are Persons estranged
 from GOD ? Is this the great Medium whereby Souls
 know GOD in CHRIST, are united with and conformed
 to him ? Is it hid only to the lost ? Surely it’s Mini-
 sters have abundant Cause to do all they can to make
 known the Gospel ; *to be instant in and out of Season* ;
 to embrace all fixed appointed Times and Seasons, with
 all other occasional Opportunities providentially given
 for preaching it ; to be unwearied and faithful in deli-
 vering the whole Counsel of God, keeping nothing
 back that may be profitable for their Hearers. “ For
 “ we are unto GOD, a sweet Savour of CHRIST in
 “ them that are saved, and in them that perish.”
 “ Tho’ to the one the Savour of Death unto Death,
 “ yet to the other the Savour of Life unto Life. For
 “ what if some do not believe, shall their Unbelief de-
 “ stroy the Faith of GOD’s Elect ? God forbid.
 “ Therefore seeing we have this Ministry, as we have
 “ received Mercy, we faint not ; but have renounced
 “ the hidden Things of Dishonesty ; not walking in
 “ Craftiness, nor handling the Word of God deceit-
 “ fully ; but by the Manifestation of the Truth, com-
 “ mending our selves to every Man’s Conscience in
 “ the Sight of GOD.”

4. From

4. From what hath been discoursed, we may see *very many and great Obligations* upon us, to be *thankful* for, *highly to prize*, and *well improve* the *Gospel*.

Which is dispensed to *us*, while Thousands in the World never heard the glad Tydings ; comes to us under greater Advantages than ever it came to any before GOD was manifest in the Flesh ; comes richly laden with the manifold Blessings of CHRIST, with many exceeding great and precious Promises, holy Doctrines and Precepts ; plainly informing what Man *was* before, what we *are* by our Apostacy from GOD ; what we are by Renovation, how and by whom this is wrought ; strongly asserting what Man is and shall be advanced to, in his glorified State ; when we shall be made like to the *Angels* of GOD : tho' indeed we know not the Extent, the Fulness of that Glory, and cannot distinctly tell what we shall be ; yet we know that we shall be like CHRIST ; for we shall see him as he is, be for ever with him where he is, and behold his Glory : and as plainly shewing, their dreadful Fate, who are disobedient to the heavenly Command.

It becomes us sure, to have and always to maintain a grateful Sense of GOD's great and distinguishing Goodness, in giving us this divine, this glorious Dispensation ; with Prayer and Diligence to read the *holy Scriptures*, searching them daily : as we have Opportunity, with Reverence to attend upon the *Word preached* ; meditating thereon continually ; yielding a present continued unfeigned universal Obedience thereto. It becomes us surely to *believe* the *Gospel*, that what GOD speaks therein he will and doth perform ; not suffering one of his Words to fall to the Ground ; but that all even to a Tittle, shall be fulfilled ; that the Wicked shall not go unpunished, nor the Righteous unrewarded. We should believe the *Promises*, firmly and earnestly expecting their Accomplishment ; all *which*,
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in CHRIST, *are Yea, and in him Amen, unto the Glory of GOD* : for he is faithful that hath promised ; and is able not only to keep that which we commit unto him, but to see that nothing fail of all the Good which he hath spoken concerning Zion. We are obliged to believe in the GOD of the Gospel, and in his Son JESUS CHRIST, and to be yielding our selves to his holy Will in all Things.

5. What hath been said teacheth also, that it is *infinitely to be desired, that the Gospel may be conveyed to all People on the Earth, truly known by all where it is, and that our Behaviour correspond with these Designs.*

Is this the great Vehicle whereby GOD conveys the richest Treasures, the greatest Blessings to Mankind ? Without this, are they also without CHRIST, without GOD, and all good Hope in the World ? Sure we cannot too much desire that the Gospel may be preached to every Creature ; that all Nations and Languages may hear in their own Tongue the great Things of GOD and his Salvation.

Are they to whom the Gospel is hid, lost in Sin, darken'd, and perverted from the Truth ; whose neither Persons nor Services are accepted of GOD, but cursed by his Law, and so continuing must be driven out from all Enjoyments, remain, eternally remain unqualified for, and infinitely distant from, the Employments and Glories of the heavenly World ? Must they sink under the Wrath of GOD and the LAMB, with Aggravations of Guilt and Pain, for having rejected the Counsels, and sinned against the Light of the glorious Gospel ? If here also we consider that all to whom the Gospel is not hid, are truly acquainted with CHRIST, renewed in the whole Man, love and pursue Holiness, are pardoned and justified, are become the Children of GOD by Faith, are intitled to a Deliverance from all Evil, and an Advancement to all Good : how should our Souls most
eagerly

eagerly desire that all who have the Gospel may know it truly, that it may not be a hidden Gospel to any who are under so gracious a Dispensation ?

Common humanity leads us to pity poor captivated Persons among the Heathen, and such among our selves as are sorely pained or diseased in *Body*, and distressed with temporal Calamities ; do we not wish, and as we have Opportunity endeavour their Deliverance and Recovery ; especially when there are many Reasons to be assigned for our Hope, that such their Difficulties and Grievances may be redressed ? How inconceivably more are *Souls* to be pitied, their Deliverance and Recovery to be desired and attempted ; who are captivated by the Devil, diseased with the most fatal Maladies, exposed to the worst Calamities ; for whom notwithstanding the Gospel opens an effectual Door of Hope ? Ministers sure can desire nothing better, and should endeavour nothing more for their People ; Parents for their Children ; Masters for their Servants ; and each Person for himself and others ; than *this, that they may know the Truth as it is in Jesus, know the Things of their Peace in this their Day.*

We are in the Scriptures of Truth abundantly taught by Precept and Example, to be fervent, constant and persevering in our Prayers, that God will cause his Word to run and be glorified, make known his Salvation among all People, and send forth his Light and his Truth, for the increasing of the Redeemer's Kingdom and Glory. “ *That first of all Supplications, Prayers, Intercessions and giving of Thanks be made for all Men. For this is good and acceptable in the Sight of God our Saviour ; who will have ; i.e. who commands all Men, or will, i.e. effectively bring some of all Nations, Characters and Stations, to be saved, and to come unto the Knowledge of the Truth.* It was the Heart's Desire and Prayer of the Apostle to God for Israel, *that they might be saved.*

How

How frequently, how fervently do we find him praying for *Jews* and *Gentiles*, that they might know the Truth as it is in Jesus, and abound therein? For the *Ephe-
sians*, "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the
" Father of Glory, may give unto you the Spirit of
" Wisdom and Revelation in the Knowledge of him :
" The Eyes of your Understanding being enlightened ;
" that ye may know what is the Hope of his Calling,
" and what the Riches of the Glory of his Inheritance
" in the Saints ; and what is the exceeding greatness
" of his Power to us-ward who believe, according to
" the working of his mighty Power." For the *Colos-
sians*, " That ye might be filled with the Knowledge
" of his Will, in all Wisdom and spiritual Understand-
" ing : That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto
" all pleasing, being fruitful in every good Work, and
" increasing in the Knowledge of God." For the *Ga-
latians*, " travailing in Birth again until Christ should be
" formed in them." How congruous is such a Beha-
viour to the Circumstances of Men, and their Depen-
dences on God ; to the Riches of his Grace & Glory,
Love and Power in Christ, to be communicated by the
Agency of the holy Spirit in the Knowledge of the
Truth? How agreeable, that in secret, in private and
in public Prayers, this should ever be a Request, that
the glorious Gospel may be every where known? Whe-
ther it be or not, in conformity to the late Concert for
Prayer ; yet highly suitable it is that Societies, Churches,
and whole Congregations, should assemble with this special
Design ; to implore of God the most extensive Spread
of his Gospel, and the gracious Influences of his Spirit,
powerfully to accompany it throughout the World ; as
also gratefully to acknowledge the divine Goodness for
what of these he affords to Men, who is the giver of
every good Gift, with whom is the Residue of the Spi-
rit, and who only hath the Words of eternal Life.

Beside

Beside this of *Prayer*, we are diligently to attend every *Practice* whereby a Knowledge of the Gospel may hopefully be promoted and improved among ourselves and others: and should freely distribute of our earthly Goods for it's Support where it is, and for it's Conveyance where it is not. We should carefully avoid all such Things as tend to hinder it's Progress and happy Effects in the World; heedfully should we shun all Strife, Divisions, needless Debates, Contentions and Animosities, especially concerning the Gospel of Peace: we are carefully to watch against all inordinate Cares for and unrighteous Pursuits of earthly Things, all Prejudices against the Gospel; that we don't resist nor quench the holy Spirit in his friendly Motions and Benefactions; that we don't despise a preached Gospel, nor the Preachers of it; that we don't hearken to them who would subvert or keep us back from the Faith; "Left by any Means as the Serpent beguiled *Eve* thro' his Subtilty, so your Minds should be corrupted from the Simplicity that is in Christ:" that we don't join with, nor any Ways countenance such as oppose themselves to the Gospel, whether they appear openly or are more concealed as Apostles of Light; "For such are false Apostles, deceitful Workers, transforming themselves into the Angels of Christ; and no marvel, for Satan himself is transformed into an Angel of Light; therefore it is no great Thing if his Ministers also be transformed as the Ministers of Righteousness, whose End shall be according to their Works."

6. How apparently vain and fatal their *Self flatteries*, how delusory and destructive their *Hopes*, who please themselves with an Expectation of eternal Life, because they have the Gospel, and partially attend to some of it's Precepts, while they want a spiritual Acquaintance with and a hearty universal conformity thereto. This was common among the *Jews*; they boasted of the

Law, while they dishonoured God, in breaking it ; of having *Abraham* to their *Father*, while the *Faith* of *Abraham* they had not, and *his God* they hated ; the *Temple* of the Lord, the *Temple* of the Lord, are these, while the GOD of the Temple they did not serve.

How commonly like their's is the Practice of People now, God knoweth : How often they boast, in having the Gospel, in attending to some Things directed to thereby, when they never conform to it in Truth, nor bring forth the Fruits of the Spirit of Grace ; who delude themselves in hoping all is and shall be well with them, because they read and hear the Gospel, and have the delicate plentiful Provisions of God set before them, tho' they never come and feed thereon. Such will verily perish in their Sins, except they repent ; yea, it shall be more tolerable for the *Sodomites*, and the People that dwelt in *Tyre* and *Sidon* in the Day of Judgment, than for such who having been exalted to Heaven in Privileges shall be thrust down to the lowest Hell for their aggravated Sin and Guiltiness in having neglected and abused them.

7. Is the Gospel hid to many who are under this divine Dispensation ; are the Circumstances of such awful & tremendous ? Then certainly we should be cautious, *extremely cautious, that we be not mistaken* in a Matter of such infinite Concernment. There is not so much Danger of our being grossly ignorant, as there is of our not receiving the Truth in the Love of it, in our not submitting our selves to the Will of God as exhibited in the Gospel.

Let us therefore seriously enquire into some Things ; asking his gracious Conduct and Illuminations, who is the Father of Lights, the Searcher of all Hearts, and the Trier of the Reins of the Children of Men.

Did we ever find our selves to be ignorant of the Truth ? Do we know a Time when we were void of
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the efficacious Influence of the Holy Spirit attending the Gospel? *Commonly*, they to whom *now it is not*, know a Time *when the Gospel was hid* to them; that at that Time they were without Christ, and without God, having no good Hope in the World. This, is the *usual* Method of God in his Operations of Grace, in the Hearts of all adult Persons; they are brought to know themselves to be in Darkneſs. “And JESUS ſaid, for Judgment I am come into this World, that they which see not might ſee, and that they which ſee might be made blind. Are we blind alſo? ſaid ſome that heard theſe Words. JESUS ſaid unto them, if ye were blind, ye ſhould have no Sin, but now ye ſay we ſee, therefore your Sin remaineth.” (*Joh. 9. 39,—41.*) Persons that are never knowing to any Time, wherein they were blind reſpecting divine and ſpiritual Objects, and this after all the human Teachings with which they may have been favoured; ſuch may *generally* with great Propriety conclude, the Goſpel is yet hid to them. All who believe to the ſaving of their Souls, are *born not of Blood, nor of the Will of the Fleſh, nor of the Will of Man, but of God*. It is not what runs in the Blood; it is not by the good Inſtructions, Counſels, and Examples of others; nor by their own Righteouſneſs, Strength and Wiſdom; No; they hear and learn of the Father, are irradiated by the Spirit of God, whereby they become acquainted with the great Truths in the Goſpel, and know the only true God and Jeſus Chriſt whom he hath ſent; otherwiſe *the Light that is in them is Darkneſs, and how great is that Darkneſs?* When Perſons are once tranſlated out of the Kingdom of Darkneſs, into that of God’s dear Son; they can *commonly* remember ever after, that they were Darkneſs; that there was a Time, when they had not that Knowledge concerning God, his Word, Spirit & Operations, which now they have.

But it may be fit again, solemnly to inquire ; Do we know a Time when we were estranged from God, under the Dominion of Sin, totally opposite to the Holiness and Purity of his Nature and Laws ? When he would have been just in damning us for ever ? When we were lost in Sin, so lost that no Arm short of the Almighty, could bring Salvation ; lost eternally, unless infinite Mercy and Omnipotence should interpose ? They can *commonly* answer in the Affirmative, to whom the Gospel is not hid.

Once more, Do we know *a Day of God's Power*, wherein we have been made truly willing to entertain CHRIST as he is offered in the Gospel ? Do we, have we rested on him only for Salvation ? Is Christ transcendently amiable, infinitely excellent, and altogether lovely, in our Estimation ? Have we seen any Thing of his Glory, the Glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of Grace and Truth ? Is Christ become precious, and infinitely endeared to us, in his Person, Natures, Offices and Works, as God-Man-Mediator ? Is the *History*, and are the *Doctrines* of Christ, our Delight ? Do we meditate thereon ? Do we love *the Word of GOD*, esteeming it as a choice Treasure, preferable to fine Gold, and the richest Pearls ? Is it sweeter than Honey to our Taste, and more pleasant than the Honey-Comb ? Do we esteem it as our necessary Food, whereby our Souls are to be fed and nourished, strengthened and animated for and toward God ? Have we tasted and seen that the Lord is good ? Do we prize, highly prize *his Commandments* ? Are we subjected to them willingly and universally, are they not grievous to us ?

Do we attend unto *every known Duty*, so that we live not in the Neglect of any Thing to which we know God calleth us ? Is there any Transgression of God's Law knowingly indulged by us ? Do we depart from all Iniquity, laying aside every Weight, and such Sins

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as more easily beset us ? Are we Mourners before God for our own, and the Sins of others ? Do we hate Iniquity, and love Righteousness ? Persons may shun the Extremes of Cold and Heat, their Enemies Swords or Cannon, from a *fear* of receiving Harm thereby ; but with a very different Temper, do we shun a Toad or Serpent ; our Natures loath and abhor them, avoid the Sight and Thought of them, even when there is no Danger of being hurt by them. When we avoid Sin *only thro' fear* of some ill Attendant or Consequence thereof ; this doth not at all argue our State to be good. To refrain the open Practice, while the Heart and Affections cleave to and delight in Sin, is nothing more than what lost Persons may go into. If we know the Grace of God in Truth, we hate *all known Sin*, with all it's Appearances ; loath and abhor our selves for Sin ; are applying daily to the Fountain that God hath opened, for cleansing and healing therefrom.

Have we *the Law of God* written in our Hearts ? Have we the Image of God drawn upon us ? Of Christ's Fulness, have we received and Grace for Grace ? i.e. the same Graces for Kind, which were in Christ, have we in our selves, thro' a Derivation thereof from him ? Do we love *Retirement for Meditation & Prayer* ; and delight in all Duties of Piety ? Do we love and live in the Exercise of Righteousness, Truth & Charity towards others ; Meekness, Sobriety, Temperance, Self-Denial and Purity respecting our selves ? In these Christ abounded.

Are we acquainted with the gracious Indwelling and Influences of the Holy Ghost ? Do we know what meaneth the Presence and Absence of the Comforter ? Or do we live and see no Changes respecting the Spirit of Grace ? Knowing nothing of the gracious Coming, or mournful Departures of this divine Paraclete ? This indeed seems to be the melancholy State of many : they
never

never mourn by Reason of Darkneſs and the Abſence or want of the holy Spirit ; becauſe they have never been enlightened, quickened, ſtrengthened, reſreſhed, and comforted thereby. In a Word, Do we bring forth the Fruits of the Spirit, and live by the Faith of the Son of God ?

8. Doth the Day dawn, my Brethren, is the Day-Star riſen in any of your Hearts ? ~~It~~ **I**ſ is to be hop'd, that you will not eaſily forget, but *carefully retain*, and *more deeply fix* in your Souls, weighty and very *ſenſible Impreſſions* of the *great Things* God hath done for you, and of *your very ſingular Obligations* to love and obey him ?

Upon the moſt calm, ſtrict, and prayerful Examinations, can you truly conclude on *Scripture* Grounds, and comfortably or ſafely hope that the Goſpel is not a ſealed Book to you ; that you truly know ſomething of the Myſtery of Godlineſs, great as it is ; that you are not altogether Strangers to the Myſtery of Iniquity, the Plague of your own Hearts, and that All-ſufficient Remedy which God hath provided and offers to us in the Goſpel ? O how many, how great are the Bleſſings already conferred upon you, and to which you are intitled, of which you will be ſurely, ſpeedily, eternally poſſeſſed ? You will ſure return and give God thanks ; ever chearfully acknowledging him who hath open'd your Eyes, and made you to differ from others ; and that he hath not done this from any Good which he foreſaw to be in you, but only becauſe he was pleaſed to pre-determine theſe Mercies for, and confer them upon you ; having choſen you to Salvation thro' Sanctification of the Spirit, and Belieff of the Truth ; becauſe he will have Mercy on whom he will have Mercy. See that you aſcribe all the Praise and Glory to God.

“ Not for your Sakes do I this ſaith the Lord God, be
 “ it known unto you ; be aſhamed & confounded for
 “ your

“ your own Ways, O House of Israel ! * God hath done this, not because you can be profitable to him, as one Man may be so to another ; not because you were undeserving his Wrath ; nor yet because you were not throughout defiled, and altogether guilty, or less so than others ; *but for the Sake of his own great Name, God blotteth out thy Transgressions, and will not remember thy Sins !* † Ye sure will remember your Ways and your Doings, wherein ye have been defiled, and loath your selves in your own Sight, for all your Evils that ye have committed. And ye shall know that I am the LORD, when I have wrought with you for my Name’s Sake ; not according to your wicked Ways, nor according to your corrupt Doings, O ye House of Israel, saith the Lord GOD. †

See that you live agreeable to your Calling and Adoption of God ; to the Priviledges, Vows and Hopes, that you are under : that your Conversation be as becometh the Gospel, in all Purity and Holiness, avoiding the Appearance of Evil. Walk humbly before God, casting all your Cares upon him, for he careth for you. Be sober, be vigilant, because your Adversary the Devil as a roaring Lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour, whom resist stedfast in the Faith. Girding up the Loins of our Minds, let us run with Patience the Race that is set before us ; looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our Faith : So run that ye may obtain.” See that ye shine as Lights in the World ; whereby your heavenly Father may be glorified, ‡ your Brethren on Earth converted & edified, and your selves comforted, as being and shewing your selves to be indeed, the Disciples & Friends of Christ. ¶

Have you seen a Glory in the Gospel ? Have you been extremely delighted in the Glories, the surpassing Glories

* Ezek. xxxvi. 25,---32. † Isai. xliii. 25. ‡ Ezek. xx. 43, 44. ‡ Matth. v. 14,--16. ¶ Joh. 15. 8, 14.

Glories of divine Objects ? “ Hath it pleased the Father to reveal his Son in you, to shed Abroad his Love in your Hearts, by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us ; whereby we have been made to rejoyce in Hope of the Glory of God ? ” Let the Beauty of the Lord your God remain upon you : keep your selves in his Love ; come to him your exceeding Joy ; and be ye Followers of God as dear Children. Are you at any Time under Clouds and the hidings of his Face ; still wait for, and earnestly cry after him, as a Child crying to, and following his Parent, that turneth from him : ever remembring, that as a Father pitieth his Children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. See that ye follow the Lord wholly ; that ye know more of God and his Will, and be more conformed thereto ; that ye imitate & resemble him in his moral Perfections, his Holiness, Righteousness, Goodness, Love, Kindness, Mercy, Compassion, &c. shewing forth the Vertues and Praises of him who hath called you into a Knowledge of his Kingdom and Glory : that ye be intirely obedient to his Commands ; submissive, patient and resigned in all Afflictions ; meek and lowly in Prosperity ; in every Thing giving Thanks ; living as the Children of the Day and of the Light ; laying up Treasures in Heaven ; being rich in good Works ; as ye have Opportunity, doing Good to and seeking the Happiness of all Men ; sympathizing with them in their Adversities ; rejoycing, heartily rejoycing in all that is good and advantageous to them. See that ye war the Christian Warfare, with Constancy, Resolution, Watchfulness ; taking to you the whole Armour of God ; that ye go on from Strength to Strength ; working out your Salvation with Fear and Trembling ; stedfast and unmoveable, always abounding in the Work of the Lord ; for as much as ye know that it is God who worketh in you both to will and to do of his good
Pleasure,

Pleasure, and that your Labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.

9. Let all, *who hitherto have not known the Gospel spiritually*, now apply to God for *this Knowledge*: To him who only can take the Vail off your Hearts, and cause the Light to shine in upon the Soul with such Efficacy, as shall cause you to behold, and to be changed from Glory to Glory, in beholding the Glory of God in his Son Jesus. He can bring this Glass so near, and reflect the Rays so strongly, that your Souls shall take the heavenly Fire and enkindle to a fervent Love to God & Charity toward Men. Let no Man deceive thee, deceive not thyself, with this proud, vain Imagination, that you don't need the special creative, regenerating Influences of the Holy Spirit, to enlighten and renew, to purify and cleanse the Heart.

David, a Man after God's own Heart, and much acquainted with his Word, yet requests of him, "Open thou mine Eyes, that I may behold wondrous Things out of thy Law." Did he need the Teachings of God's holy Spirit, rightly to behold divine Truth; how much more do all such need the special Influences thereof, who are unregenerate? God Almighty can, and he only can, sprinkle you, so that you shall be clean, and give you a new Heart; and put within you a new Spirit.

This is what God hath promised to do for and in all his People. "I will take away the stony Heart out of your Flesh: And I will give an Heart of Flesh; and I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my Statutes, and ye shall keep my Judgments, and do them."|| Acknowledge God therefore to be the Author and Finisher of this great Work: cry earnestly to him for his holy Spirit: Ask, seek, knock, instantly, importunately, perseveringly: come

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come to God, agreeable to *Luke* 18. 1,—8 ; And Chap. 13. *ŷ.* 24 ; *Strive to enter in at the strait Gate ; for many I say unto you will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.*

Consider ; your present State is deplorable, and if continued in will be irremediable. Now there is a Door of Hope ; Mercy is now offered ; there is Forgiveness with God that he may be feared ; with him is plenteous Redemption ; whosoever will, let him come, and him that cometh God will in no wise cast out, or reject ; now is the acceptable Time, now is the Day of Salvation : To Day if any among you will hear his Voice, harden not your Hearts ; very shortly, Time with all it's Opportunities, shall be no longer.

It affords a melancholy Prospect, that Men don't know nor love God where *Paganish* Idolatries reign :† but more so, that many among the ancient *Israelites* and *Jews* were disobedient to the Truth ; “ when God at sundry Times and in divers Manners spake to them by the Prophets,” they contracted much Guilt in counteracting their Light, in abusing their Privileges. But how much more melancholy, how shocking to the last Degree, that Men should continue in Darkness & Disobedience now *in these last Days*, when God hath spoken to us by his Son ! whereby they contract far more Sinfulness, Guiltiness and Defilement ? “ For if we sin
“ wilfully after that we have received the Knowledge
“ of the Truth, there remaineth no more Sacrifice for
“ Sins, but a certain fearful looking for of Judgment,
“ and fiery Indignation, which shall devour the Ad-
“ versaries. He that despised *Moses* Law, died with-
“ out Mercy under the *Hands or Testimonies* of two or
“ three Witnesses ; Of how much sorer Punishment
“ suppose ye shall he be thought worthy, who hath trod-
“ den under Foot the Son of God, and hath counted
“ the

† Rom. i. 18,—25. ii. 6, ——— 16.

“ the Blood of the Covenant wherewith he was sancti-
 “ fied, an unholy Thing, and hath done despite unto
 “ the Spirit of Grace ? For we know him that hath
 “ said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recom-
 “ pence, saith the Lord.” Therefore we ought to
 “ give the more earnest heed to the Things which we
 “ have heard, lest at any Time we should let them slip.
 “ For if the Word spoken, by Angels, was stedfast, and
 “ every Transgression and Disobedience received a just
 “ Recompence of Reward ; how shall we escape if we
 “ neglect so great Salvation, which at the first began
 “ to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto
 “ us by them that heard him ; God also bearing them
 “ Witness both with Signs and Wonders, and with
 “ divers Miracles, and Gifts of the holy Ghost, accord-
 “ ing to his own Will ?”

Should we attend only to the Reasonableness thereof,
 we must conclude, that *now* under so clear and strong,
 so burning and shining a Light as the Gospel gives,
 every Heart will be enlightened and soften'd, melted in-
 to a godly Sorrow, and genuine Repentance, inflamed
 with divine and heavenly Affections ; that under such
 gracious Beams, all Men will give a present, cordial,
 joyful Entertainment to the Lord of Life and Glory.
 Now, when the Truths of God and his Salvation are so
 plainly set before us, when our Duty is so apparent and
 incontestible, when the glorious Rewards of Grace are
 so great, so rich, so sure, so near, so durable, so di-
 vine ; who will not come and in holy Obedience, par-
 take thereof ? When the righteous Judgments of
 God for Impenitence and Disobedience, are by the Gos-
 pel represented to be so awful, so tremendous, so una-
 voidable, & eternal ; sure henceforth no Person will go
 on in his Sins. *Now* when the Love and Kindness of
 God appear so marvellous and matchless, the Heighth
 and Depth, the Length and Breadth whereof, infinitely

exceed all Description and Thought ; sure we should love him who hath so loved the World : The Love of Christ should constrain us henceforth, not to live unto our selves, but unto him that died for us.

Findest thou no Relentings, O Sinner, no Movings of Heart ? Hath Christ died that he might atone for our Sins, and reconcile us to God ; and wilt thou not repent and turn, and be reconciled to him ? Wilt thou not now shew thy self to be a Man, a reasonable Person ; escaping the Damnation of Hell, by a hearty Reception of the Lord Jesus Christ ?

Now when pardon of all Sins is so freely tender'd ; tho' Sin hath abounded, the Grace of God aboundeth much more ; who therefore will not come in upon the Gospel offer, and receive pardoning Mercy from God ? Is there Provision in the Gospel for Sinners of every Denomination ; healing for Backsliders, Pardon and Salvation for every one that believeth ; Who is there among you that will not come and receive ? Tho' the former Times of Ignorance among the *Heathen* God winked at ; tho' under the Law and the Prophets Multitudes were stiff-necked, always resisting the Holy Ghost ; yet *now* the Kingdom of God being preached, every Man surely will be pressing into it. Doth God command all Men every where to repent ; and will not you hearken to this Call of God ? Hath he last of all sent his own Son ; surely God expects that we hear and Reverence him, who on Account of his Person, Message, and otherwise, is infinitely worthy ? Did he who dwelleth in the Bosom of the Father, come forth from God, that he might declare or reveal him to us ; and shall we not receive the Revelation ? Did he come full of Grace & Truth, and dwell here, that he might promote Knowledge and Holiness among Men ; and shall we refuse to be made wise ? Did he come that he might bring many Sons

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and Daughters to Glory ; to confer upon us innumerable Blessings, a Salvation so sure, sweet, easy and great ; is he ready to give his holy Spirit, for the quickening of dead Souls, for instructing the blind, strengthening the weak, thereby to guide and conduct us to the Fountain of Life and Blessedness ; and will ye after all, reject him and his Salvation ?

What think ye, Sinners, what Determinations are ye coming into ? God invites you to Salvation, the Salvation of your Souls ; every of which are of far more Worth and more excellent than the whole unintelligent Creation ; your immortal Souls, for which nothing is to be given in Exchange ; will you see to their Safety ? God commands you *now* to come and be saved ; *now* to believe on his Son, *now* to partake of that Salvation which terminates in nothing short of all that Blessedness, Honour and Glory, of which human Nature is capable ; will you come & be happy ? O for GOD's sake, come, for Christ's sake, for the sake of your Souls, come ! Be willing that the Light of the glorious Gospel shine in unto you ; to renounce every Sin ; to surrender your selves to God ; to the Light and Guidance of his Word and Spirit. We are under the last gracious *Dispensation* from God ; he that continues in his Sins under *this*, will never have any other : He that doth not very speedily obey *this*, will very shortly be concluded under Sin and Death for ever. *He that is unjust, let him be unjust still ; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still.*

O that God may help you *now* to attend unto your eternal Salvation ; now to know the Things of your Peace ! Will you be prevailed with seriously to consider ? So long as you remain in your present State, you neither can nor will love, nor serve, nor enjoy God ; you are cut off from all good Hope ; are exposed to all
Kinds

Kinds of Wretchedness and Woes ; and these in the highest, most excruciating, painful Measures.

O that you might not delay, but *now* even to Day, let your Covenant with Death, and your Agreement with Hell, be disannulled ! O that the God of all Grace would be pleased to give you present and thoro' Repentance. Be ye continually looking and crying to the Fountain of Light, that he would be pleased graciously to lead you into all that Truth which is needful in order to your glorifying, and being glorified for ever with him.

To conclude, Let it be deeply impressed on each of our Hearts, that we are lost, eternally, dreadfully lost, if we live and die without a real Knowledge of Christ and conformity to him, by a divine Influence in and upon our Souls : Such to whom the Gospel is now hid, are in Sin and under Condemnation for Sin ; and continuing in this State, will be eternally miserable beyond all Expression, and the utmost Reach of Imagination : Seeing it is a righteous Thing with God to recompence
 " Tribulation to them ; when coming to judge
 " the World in Righteousness, the Lord Jesus shall
 " be revealed from Heaven with his mighty Angels,
 " in flaming Fire, taking Vengeance on them that know
 " not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord
 " Jesus Christ ; who shall be punished with everlasting
 " Destruction from the Presence of the Lord, and
 " from the Glory of his Power ; when he shall come to
 " be glorified in his Saints, & to be admired in all them
 " that believe (because our Testimony among you was
 " believed) in that Day, Wherefore also we pray al-
 " ways for you, that our God would count you wor-
 " thy of this Calling, and fulfil all the good Pleasure
 " of his Goodness, and the Work of Faith with Power ;
 " that

“ that the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be
“ glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the
“ Grace of our God, and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

“ *NOW* to Him that is of Power to stablish you (ac-
“ cording to my Gospel, and the Preaching of Jesus Christ,
“ according to the Revelation of the Mystery which was
“ kept secret since the World began, but now is made
“ manifest, and by the Scriptures of the Prophets, ac-
“ cording to the Commandment of the everlasting GOD,
“ made known to all Nations for the Obedience of Faith;)
“ To GOD only wise, be Glory, thro’ JESUS CHRIST
“ for ever,

A M E N.



... of our Lord Jesus Christ may be
... in your mind according to the
... of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ

... to him that it is I say to justify you (ac-
... to my Gospel, and the preaching of John the Baptist,
... to the Revelation of the Holy Spirit which was
... since the World began, but now is made
... and by the scriptures of the Prophets, ac-
... to the Commandment of the everliving GOD,
... known to all Nations for the Obedience of Faith)
... GOD only wife, to glory, thro' JESUS CHRIST
... for ever



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